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## Eating Healthy isn't just for Women

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**By Susan Yake, clinical dietitian, Naval Hospital Bremerton**



Nutrition affects the function of the body allowing us to lead an active life and have more energy. (U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Angus Beckles)

Women's Health Month provides a great opportunity to remind everyone, not just one gender, on Healthy Eating and Nutrition.

What we eat are the building blocks of our body. We would not think of using inferior products to construct our home. Our body is where we live at all times no matter what our duty station or part of the world we live. Nutrition is a major key to feeling better and functioning better. Nutrition affects the function of the body allowing us to lead an active life and have more energy. We need protein to build and repair the body, carbohydrate to fuel it, fat for energy and transport of nutrients, and vitamins and minerals to help the body function normally. Too much or too little of these nutrients can cause disease.



Eating fruits and vegetables can affect gene expression in a positive way such as reducing blood pressure, preventing cancer, and fortifying the body to prevent illness.

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Eating fruits and vegetables can affect gene expression in a positive way such as reducing blood pressure, preventing cancer, and fortifying the body to prevent illness. The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet can lower blood pressure equal to a medication to control hypertension. Phytonutrients in plants that contribute to color and flavor in the produce we eat are known to prevent cancer, especially if eaten in a variety of colors. The orange colored fruits and vegetables such as carrots, pumpkins, and winter squash contain carotenoids. They are great for the skin, help you see well in the dark, and slow the aging of the eye so you can have good vision longer as you get older. Even garlic has a mild antibiotic effect that might be just strong enough to protect you from a cold or flu.



What dietitians excel at is individualizing the person's meal plan so they can enjoy food.

When an individual changes over from lousy eating habits to a health-eating routine, they gain numerous physical and physiological benefits. With a more nutrient dense diet minus excess solid fats and added sugars, healthy eating provides a consistent energy level allowing the person to be more productive with their time. They feel better and the body functions better. Nutrition is the foundation for functional medicine; a practice of medicine started by Dr. Jeffrey S. Bland designed to conquer the causes of chronic disease. For those who eat

healthy and have an active lifestyle, they can live a longer and healthier life.

There are those who think that healthy eating and nutrition is a tedious journey filled with distasteful products, I refute their ill-placed, not tasted, logic.

What people are afraid of is that they will not be able to eat their favorite foods again. We all have food preferences and those are taken into consideration during consultation.

What dietitians excel at is individualizing the person's meal plan so they can enjoy food. The reality is that we are eating too much food. Often it is a portion control problem. Even if a certain food is calorie dense, the recipe can be modified to lower the calories without sacrificing the flavor. I recently served with the Diabetes Care and Education Dietetic Practice Group of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The board worked with celebrity chefs to modify recipes to be healthy for patients diagnosed with diabetes.



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As the waistlines of Americans have expanded so has the frequency of obesity and diabetes at about the same pace. NHB dietitians offer classes and individual counseling to help beneficiaries – Sailors, Marines, their families and retirees – prevent or treat chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

And for a tasty treat that keeps on giving, please call 1-800-404-4506 to enroll in NHB's *Intro to Nutrition Class* or contact your provider for a consult to see one of the dietitians. For those

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at other military treatment facilities, please contact their Health and Wellness Departments for more information.

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